



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS
Washington, D.C. 20231
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/852,804	05/11/2001	Takao Kasai	0445-0299P	5485

2292 7590 06/24/2002

BIRCH STEWART KOLASCH & BIRCH
PO BOX 747
FALLS CHURCH, VA 22040-0747

[REDACTED]
EXAMINER

STEPHENS, JACQUELINE F

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
3761	

DATE MAILED: 06/24/2002

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	09/852,804	KASAI ET AL. <i>CM</i>
	Examiner Jacqueline F Stephens	Art Unit 3761

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-11 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 1-11 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

- 11) The proposed drawing correction filed on ____ is: a) approved b) disapproved by the Examiner.
 If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.

- 12) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1.) Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2.) Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 3.) Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
 * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
 a) The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
 15) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). ____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) <u>3</u> . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

1. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

2. Claims 2 and 6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Claims 2 and 6 recites the limitation "the skin-contacting surface" in line 2. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

(e) the invention was described in-

(1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effect under this subsection of a national application published under section 122(b) only if the international application designating the United States was published under Article 21(2)(a) of such treaty in the English language; or
(2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that a patent shall not be deemed filed in the United States for the purposes of this subsection based on the filing of an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a).

4. Claims 1-7 and 9, as best understood by the examiner, are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Paul et al. (USPN 6217890 B1).

Regarding claim 1, Paul discloses an absorbent article comprising an absorbent layer containing a superabsorbent polymer and a liquid-impermeable leak-proof layer (Abstract and col. 24, lines 17-32). Paul discloses an agent having a skin care effect that is activated on contact with moisture (col. 23, lines 66 through col. 24, lines 16).

Regarding claim 2, Paul discloses the agent is fixed on a skin-contacting surface of the article (col. 17, lines 41-45).

Regarding claim 3, Paul discloses the agent comprises a water-soluble or water-dispersible plant extract (col. 20, lines 51-65).

Regarding claim 4, Paul discloses the superabsorbent polymer has a water absorption within the claimed range (col. 24, lines 57-62).

Regarding claims 5-7, Paul discloses the absorbent article comprises a liquid-retentive absorbent layer, a liquid-impermeable leak-proof layer, and an agent having an effect on the skin of a wearer on the skin-contacting surface of the article (Abstract, col 17, lines 41-45). Paul discloses the agent contains a water-soluble viscosity enhancer (thickener) (col. 13, lines 55-64 and col. 15, lines 7-21). Claim 7 , is a product-by-process claim, which is limited by and defined by the process, determination of patentability is based on the product itself. The patentability of a product does not depend on its method of production. If the product in the product-by-process claim is the same as or obvious from a product of the prior art, the claim is unpatentable even though the prior product was made by a different process. In re Thorpe, 777 F.2d 695, 698, 227 USPQ 964, 966 (Fed. Cir. 1985) (citations omitted). MPEP 2113.

Regarding claim 9, Paul discloses the agent has a dissolving temperature of 30-100°C, which includes the claimed range of 40-100°C (col. 16, lines 53-61).

5. Claims 10 and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Blieszner et al. (USPN 5648083).

Regarding claim 10, Blieszner discloses substrate impregnated with a skin care agent containing a water-soluble polyol, which renders it responsive to moisture (col. 3, lines 30-41 and col 7, lines 54-56).

Regarding claim 11, Blieszner discloses the agent contains oil and water-soluble polyols (col. 4, lines 11-19). Blieszner further discloses butylenes glycol may be present in the agent as a water-soluble polyol (col. 7, line 61 through col. 8, line 9).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

6. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

7. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was

not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

8. Claim 8 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Paul in view of Yanaki et al. (USPN 5538728). Paul discloses the present invention substantially as claimed. However, Paul fails to disclose the water-soluble thickener comprises the claimed material. Yanaki discloses polysaccharide used as a thickener in a skin care composition (col. 3, lines 19-25 and col. 4, lines 11-14, and col. 8, lines 15-44). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to incorporate polysaccharide in the agent of Paul. Doing so would provide a water-soluble thickener that gives enhanced viscosity without providing a sticky feeling as taught by Yanaki.

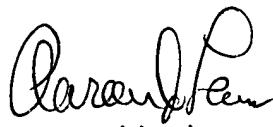
Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jacqueline F Stephens whose telephone number is (703)308-8320. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 9:00-5:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Dennis Ruhl can be reached on (703)308-22262. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (703)305-3590 for regular communications and (703)306-4520 for After Final communications.

Art Unit: 3761

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703)308-0858.

Jacqueline F Stephens
Examiner
Art Unit 3761



Aaron J. Lewis
Primary Examiner

June 3, 2002